

INCIDENTS OF HEALINGS

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The year 1883 was one of the busiest, most interesting and successful, in the Society's history: certain of its features were very picturesque, as will duly appear. Forty-three new Branches were organized, the majority in India and by myself. My travels extended over seven thousand miles, which means much more than it would in the United States, where one has a railway train to take him to any desired place, and has not to shift to the backs of elephants or have his bones ground together in springless bullock-carts. My colleague and I were separated most of the time, she stopping at home to carry on the *Theosophist* and I wandering over the Great Peninsula to lecture on Theosophy, heal the sick, and found new Branches.

The first weeks of January were given to the settlement of our household in the new headquarters, and my Diary is full of details of the buying of furniture, the arrangement of the "Shrine Room," of now polluted memory, but which was to us, during the next two years, a spot hallowed by frequent intercourse with the Masters and many palpable phenomenal proofs of their active interest in ourselves and in the great movement.

Marion Crawford's *Mr. Isaacs* was sent us at this time by his uncle, Mr. Sam. Ward, one of our most enthusiastic members, who also wrote me certain interesting particulars about its production. It was—he told us—inspired by the published accounts of Mahatma K. H., and the idea so took possession of Mr. Crawford that, having once begun writing, he gave himself no rest, scarcely even food, until it was finished. He wrote it in less than four weeks, and Mr. Ward says that it almost seemed as if his nephew had been under the influence of an outside power.

Mr. Crawford makes—as any true occultist will tell him—the mistake of having his ideal Eastern adept, Ram Lal, meddling in the love affairs of the hero and heroine, whereas this is inconsistent with the tendencies of a person who has evolved up to and lives mainly on the plane of spirituality. Bulwer¹ was equally wrong, nay worse, in making his adept, Zanoni, abandon, after ages of spiritual striving and success, the

¹ Edward Bulwer-Lytton, author of the occult novel *Zanoni*.

fruits of his Yoga, and drop to the vulgar level of us weaklings, who are held in the bonds of the flesh and give and are given in marriage. Both Zanoni and Ram Lal are, as presented to us, practically impossibilities, save as aberrations of nature and the victims of overpowering conspiracies of brutish forces, which they must have vanquished over and over again as they mounted upward from the lower levels where passion reigns and the guiding light of wisdom is hidden. Sexual unions are perfectly natural for the average human being, but perfectly unnatural for the evolved ideal man.

Friendly letters came pouring in to us this month from Sweden, France, Uruguay, Russia, and America, thus showing how the interest in Theosophical ideas was spreading. At this time the covenants for purchase of the Adyar property were signed and exchanged, and I set to work to raise the money, heading the list with a donation of Rs. 2000, or one-fifth of the sum needed, from H. P. B. and myself—the mention of which fact is, perhaps, pardonable in view of the cruel things said about our having exploited the Society for our personal gain.

On the 16th January a public reception was given us by the Madras (Native) public at Pachaiappa's Hall. It was a scene of great enthusiasm and excitement. The building was packed to the doors, its approaches crowded, and everything done to signify the pleasure felt in our change of home. Raja Gajapâti Row, a well-known personage in the Madras Presidency, took the chair on the occasion, and speeches were made by him and Judges P. Sreenevasa Row and G. Muttuswamy Chetty, of the Court of Small Causes. I observe that in the course of my response I broached the idea of making a sort of Hindu Sunday School Union, to open schools and publish catechisms for the religious education of Hindu youth, on their own lines, and that it was warmly supported by the leaders of the Hindu community and unanimously ratified by the cheering audience. At that time it might, perhaps, have been regarded as a fanciful scheme; but now, thirteen years later, we see in it a fair way to being realized; a number of Hindu boys' societies are fully at work, and the little magazine which represents their interests² has a constantly growing circulation.

As our lives are made up of unconsidered trifles, and as I wish to give my narrative the seal of reality, I have mentioned many little incidents which help to fill in the picture and place us, pioneers, before the mind's eye as living beings, not as the

² *The Arya Bala Bodhini*

absurd exaggerations which have been so often and so unfortunately indulged in. If H. P. B. wrote mighty books, she also ate her fried eggs swimming in grease every morning, and this narrative has to do with the actual personage instead of the ideal. So I record a little detail that interested me enough at the time to make me record it. The presence of a little river back of the house awakened in us the old love of swimming, and we all went in for it, H. P. B. with the rest of us. It must have astonished our European neighbors to see us four Europeans—for that was the time of the two Coulobms—bathing along with a half dozen dark-skinned Hindus, and splashing about and laughing together, exactly as though we did not believe we belonged to a superior race. I taught my “chum” to swim, or rather to flounder about after a fashion, and also dear Damodar, who was up to a certain point one of the greatest cowards I ever saw in the water. He would shiver and tremble if the water was half-knee high, and you may believe that neither H. P. B. nor I spared him our sarcasms. I remember well how all that changed. “Fie!” said I. “A pretty adept you will make when you dare not even wet your knee.” He said nothing then, but the next day when we went bathing *he plunged in and swam across the stream*: having taken my taunt as meant, and decided that he should swim or die. That’s the way for people to grow into adepts. TRY, is the first, last, and eternal law of self-evolution. Fail fifty, five hundred times, if you must, but try on and try ever, and you will succeed at the end. “I cannot” never built a man or a planet.

On the 17th February I was again on the move, embarking for Calcutta on the French mail steamer “Tibre.” After a pleasant voyage, I reached my destination on the 20th, and was put up at the Guest Palace (Boitakhana) of the Maharajah Sir Jotendra Mohun Tagore. His house was virtually converted into a hospital, for the sick crowded in upon me for treatment and their friends to look on. One of my first cases was an epileptic boy who was having fifty to sixty fits every day. His disease, however, speedily succumbed to my mesmeric passes, and by the fourth day the convulsions had entirely ceased. Whether the cure was permanent I do not know. Perhaps not, for it seems unlikely that deep-seated causes, so powerful as to produce such a great number of fits in a day, should be driven out by a few days’ treatment. One would have to keep up the treatment for, possibly, weeks before one could say there was a complete restoration of health. Yet it may have been so for aught I know. Epilepsy, while one of the most fearful of diseases, is at the same time one of those that yield most surely to mesmeric treatment.

I had a number of equally interesting subjects. Among them a young Brahmin, of probably twenty-eight years, who had been suffering from face paralysis for two years, sleeping with his eyes open because unable to close the eyelids, and incapable of projecting his tongue or using it for speech. When asked his name, he could only make a horrible sound in his throat, his tongue and lips being beyond his control. It was a large room where I was at work, and I was standing at one end of it when this patient was brought in. He was stopped just within the threshold by my committee, for examination. When they stated the case they drew back and left the sick man standing alone and looking at me with an eager expression. He indicated in sign language the nature of his affliction. I felt myself full of power that morning; it seemed as if I might almost mesmerize an elephant. Raising my right arm and hand vertically, and fixing my eyes upon the patient, I pronounced in Bengali the words "Be healed!" At the same time bringing my arm into the horizontal position and pointing my hand towards him. It was as though he had received an electric shock. A tremor ran through his body, his eyes closed and reopened, his tongue, so long paralyzed, was thrust out and withdrawn, and with a wild cry of joy he rushed forward and flung himself at my feet. He embraced my knees, he placed my foot on his head, and he poured forth his gratitude in voluble sentences. The scene was so dramatic, the cure so instantaneous, that every person in the room partook of the young Brahmin's emotion, and there was not an eye unmoistened with tears. Not even mine, and that is saying a good deal.

A third case was the most interesting of all. One Babu Badrinath Banerji, of Bhagulpore, an enrolled pleader of the District Court, had lost his sight. He was completely blind, and had to be led by a boy. He asked me to cure him—to restore sight, that is, to a man suffering from glaucoma, with atrophy of the optic disc, who had passed through the hands of the cleverest surgeons of Calcutta, and been discharged from the Hospital as incurable!

Ask the nearest surgeon, and he will tell you what that means. Now I had never treated a blind man, and had no idea whatever as to the chances of my doing the patient any good; but in mesmerism one can do nothing if one has the least doubt of his power to do: self-confidence is the one thing indispensable. I first tested the man's sensitiveness to my mesmeric current, for these were not cures by hypnotic suggestion that I was making, but downright, honest, old-fashioned psychopathic, i.e., mesmeric ones. I found, to my great satisfaction, that he was the most sensitive patient I had ever met with. Blind, unable even to distinguish day from night, and, therefore, unable to

see my motions and take suggestions from them as to my purposes, he stood before me, and as I advanced my finger-tips to within a half-inch of his forehead, and concentrated my will upon my hand that it should be to his nerves as a strong magnet to the suspended needle, his head inclined forward towards my fingers. I moved them slowly away, but the head also moved, and so kept following them until his forehead was within a foot's distance from the floor. I then shifted the hand noiselessly to the back of his head, and at once he moved it upward and upward until I thus drew him backwards, so that he overbalanced, and I had to catch him in my arms to keep him from falling. This in silence, without a word or a sound to give him the clue to my proceedings. My way being thus cleared, I held the thumb of my clenched right hand before one of his eyes, and that of the left over his neck, and willed a vital current to run from the one to the other, completing with my body a magnetic circuit, of which one glaucomic eye and the optic tract, to its seat of development in the brain, formed parts.

This process was continued for about half an hour, the patient remaining fully conscious always and making remarks from time to time as he chose. At the end of the experiment he could see a reddish glimmer of light in that eye. The other eye was then operated upon similarly, with the same result. He returned the next day for further treatment, and this time the light lost its reddish color and became white. Persevering for ten days, I was finally rewarded by seeing him with restored sight, able to read with one eye the smallest type in a newspaper or book, to dispense with his leader, and go about like anybody else.

A surgeon friend of mine pointing out to me the signs of glaucoma, I found the eyeballs as hard as nuts, and set myself to make them normally elastic, like my own, which I did by the third day, by simple passes and the holding of my thumbs, with "mesmeric intent," *i.e.*, with concentration of will upon the result aimed at, before the sightless orbs. This cure naturally created much talk, as the patient held every needed written proof of his malady having been pronounced incurable by the highest medical professionals; besides which, his blindness was well known to the whole community of Bhagalpore. Two medical men, graduates of the Calcutta Medical College, studied the eyes through an ophthalmoscope and wrote a report of their observations to the *Indian Mirror*, from which I think it was copied into the *Theosophist*. The sequel to the cure was most interesting and striking. His sight faded out twice and was twice restored by me; the first time after it had lasted six months, the second time after a

whole twelvemonth. In each case I found him totally blind and restored his sight with half an hour's treatment. To cure him permanently I should need to have him by me, where I could give him daily treatments until the glaucomic tendency had been completely extirpated.

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